(c) what are the steps taken by Government to improve the Indian tonnage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) The share of Indian and Foreign Shipping lines in the total volume of India's overseas trade for 1991-92 was 35.9% and 64.1%, respectively.

(b) The share of Indian tonnage in the total world tonnage in terms of GRT is about 1.41 per cent.

(c) The Government have taken the following steps to improve the Indian tonnage:

1. Automatic approval is now given for:—

(i) Acquisition of all categories of ships except crude tankers and OSVs, by Private Shipowning Companies.

(ii) Sale of ships for further trading/scrapping to a company within India or abroad.

(iii) Acquisition of ship from an Indian Shipyard; and

(iv) Acquisition for replacement tonnage.

2. Shipping companies have been allowed to retain sale proceeds of their ships abroad and utilise them for fresh acquistion.

3. Shipping companies have been given freedom to time charter out Indian ships to foreign shipping companies.

4. Shipping companies are allowed to acquire vessels through bare boat charter-cum-demise method.

5. Quarterly Block Allocation Scheme for repair of ships has been dispensed with entirely and Reserve Bank of India now releases foreign exchange for ship repair dry docking and spares for imported capital goods without any value limit.

6. Freight charges on account of movement of fertilizer and petroleum products are now allowed to be paid in convertible currency on par with other commodities.

7. With a view to attracting foreign capital for acquisition of ships, Government have relaxed the minimum percentage of share capital of an Indian company to be held by citizens of India, from 60% to 49% as per Section 21(ii)(b) of Merchant Shipping Act 1958.

**Wages of Port Workers**

4148. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of major ports and workers employed in these ports;

(b) what has been the growth in the volume of traffic vis-a-vis work force during 1980 and 1990;

(c) what has been the growth in the real wages of port workers during 1980—90; and

(d) efforts made by Government to safeguard the real wages of the port workers from erosion?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) There are eleven major ports and about 1.13 lakhs Class III & IV employees/workers were employed by the major Port Trusts and Dock Labour Boards as on 31-12-1992.

(b) Total traffic handled at the major ports in the years 1980-81 and 1990-91 and number of employees/workers under the major Port Trusts and Dock Labour Boards as on 31st December, 1980 and 1990 are as given below:—

| Total traffic handled | Total number of employees/workers |
|---|---|
| 1980-81 80.27 million tonnes. | 31-12-1980 — 1.43 Lakhs |
| 1990-91 152.86 million tonnes. | 31-12-1990 — 1.23 Lakhs |

(c) Wage (Pay and Dearness Allowance) at the minimum of the lowest pay scale of a port worker is as under:—

| |
|---|
| 1980 (December) — Rs. 618 per month |
| 1990 (December) — Rs. 1726 per month |

(d) Wages of port workers have been revised periodically.

**New Scheme for Road Developments in Priority List**

4149. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI: Will the Minister of SURFECE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether during the Eighth Plan about 20

new R&D schemes have been modified in priority list;

(b) if so, how many of them have so far been started;

(c) how many of them have been started in 1992;

(d) what was the amount utilised;

(e) whether any new highways are being planned in Madhya Pradesh: and

(f) if so, by what time work on these projects is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) In the Eighth Plan, 20 new R&D Schemes have been identified in the priority list.

(b) and (c) Four new Research Schemes have been sanctioned during 1993 and none during 1992.

(d) An amount of Rs. 7.4 lakhs has been released for these schemes so far.

(e) No, Sir.

(f) Does not arise.

**Frustration in Truck Drivers by Highway Corruption**

4150. DR. NAUNIHAL SINGH : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that thousands of truck drivers have been driven to the limits of frustration by brazen highway corruption;

(b) whether Government are aware that truck drivers being in no position to take on the law enforcing agencies, are forced to shell out crores of rupees every year to ensure a smooth passage for themselves and their vehicles through the country highways;

(c) whether Government are aware that there is a parallel enforcement wing in operation whereby permits are issued to truckers on a monthly, bimonthly or quarterly basis to officials; and

(d) if all the allegations indicated against (a), (b) and (c) above are correct, what steps have been made by the government to eradicate such corrupt practices; the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER) : (a) Some complaints have been received from truck operators/All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC) regarding harassment and highway robberies.

(b) and (c) No, Sir.

(d) As far as the question regarding harassment and highway robberies, State Governments have been requested to take the following steps to reduce such types of instances :—

(i) for vehicles coming from outside the State, the document in respect of goods carried may be checked as far as possible only at the border points, and within the State there would be no checking for such vehicles which have already been checked at the State borders;

(ii) as far as possible, the checking of drivers should be conducted jointly by the Police/Transport Departments on predetermined interval and there should not be a daily checking;

(iii) State Governments would also consider the desirability of issuing instructions prohibiting officers of the Police Department from checking of motor vehicles on the road for documents etc. except in case the vehicle is involved in accident;

(iv) State Transport Departments/Police Chiefs have also been requested to hold discussions with the representatives of A.I.M.T.C. in this regard; and

(v) with the abolition of Pathkar with effect from 1-9-93, the instances of harassment to drivers, will be substantially reduced.

**Development of National Highways by Private Sector**

4151. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) what is the amount asked for and provided for the construction, maintenance and development of National Highways; and

(b) what has been the response of private sector so far as construction and maintenance of National Highways are concerned?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) For the current year 1993-94 the amounts asked for and provided are as under :